

REMARKS

Initially, Applicants would like to express their appreciation to the Examiner for the detailed Official Action provided.

Applicants note that a supplemental Information Disclosure Statement was filed in the present application on May 12, 2004. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner consider the documents cited in the supplemental Information Disclosure Statement, and acknowledge such consideration by returning a copy of the Form PTO-1449 with the next Official Action.

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication that claims 13, 16-18 and 21 contain allowable subject matter, on page 4 of the Official Action.

Upon entry of the above amendment, claims 15, 16 and 21 will have been amended and claim 19 will have been canceled. Accordingly, claims 1-18, 20 and 21 are currently pending. Claims 1-9 have apparently been withdrawn from consideration by the Examiner. Applicants respectfully request entry of the present amendments, reconsideration of the outstanding rejections and allowance of all the claims pending in the present application.

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Applicants note that claims 16 and 21, which the Examiner has indicated as containing allowable subject matter, have been rewritten into independent form. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request an early indication of the allowance of claims 16-18 and 21.

On pages 2 and 3 of the Official Action, claims 10-12 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over TAYLOR et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,975,090) in view of JP 11-191478. (Applicants note that an English language translation of JP 11-191478 is provided as an attachment hereto).

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 10-12 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Claim 10 includes, inter alia, “an outer body disposed at or in a vicinity of an ion blowoff port, and a resistance element through which the ground electrode is connected with the outer body.” Applicants submit that TAYLOR et al. lacks any disclosure of *a resistance element which connects a ground electrode to an outer body*. Applicants further submit that JP 11-191478 does not provide any teaching of *a resistance element which connects a ground electrode to an outer body*.

Applicants note that Figures 4A through 5 of TAYLOR et al. depict various embodiments which include needle electrodes 232 and ground electrodes 242. However, there is no disclosure in TAYLOR et al. of a resistance element which connects any of the ground electrodes 242 to an outer body (as is apparently acknowledged by the Examiner in the statement of the rejection). In contrast, the present application teaches providing such resistance elements in order to reduce electrification around the blowoff port which would interfere with ion emissions. Note, for example, resistance elements 5 in Figures 14-20; page 5, lines 12-18; page 16, lines 10-21; page 17, lines 1-18; page 18, lines 8-17; and page 18, line 28 through page 19, line 3.

Further, Applicants note that JP 11-191478 appears to disclose a "blowout hole" 4 which can be connected by a resistor to a ground 7. However, Applicants submit that JP 11-191478 does not provide any teaching of a resistance element *through which a ground electrode is connected with an outer body*. In this regard, Applicants submit that the "blowout hole" 4 is not a *ground electrode cooperable with the needle electrode to generate a corona discharge*, and that the ground 7 is not an *outer body* (note body case 1). The Examiner is invited to review the English language translation of JP 11-191478 which is provided as an attachment hereto.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that JP 11-191478 does not provide any teaching which would have motivated one of ordinary skill in the art to make the modification suggested by the Examiner. Further, Applicants submit that such modification is clearly the result of impermissible hindsight reasoning based upon the disclosure of the present application, rather than the teachings of the references themselves.

Applicants also submit that dependent claims 11-13, which are at least patentable due to their dependency from claim 10, for the reasons noted above, recite additional features of the invention and are also separately patentable over the prior art of record.

Claim 14 includes, inter alia, “an outer body disposed on an ion emission side and exposed to an outside, said outer body being made of an antistatic material and connected with the ground electrode.” Applicants submit that TAYLOR et al. lacks any disclosure of *an outer body made of an antistatic material and connected with a ground electrode*. Applicants further submit that JP 11-191478 does not provide any teaching of *an outer body made of an antistatic material and connected with a ground electrode*

As noted above, TAYLOR et al. depict various embodiments which include needle electrodes 232 and ground electrodes 242. However, there is no disclosure in TAYLOR et al. of *an outer body which is made of an antistatic material and which is connected with a ground electrode* (as is apparently acknowledged by the Examiner in the statement of the rejection). In contrast, the present application teaches providing such an outer body

in order to reduce electrification around the blowoff port which would interfere with ion emissions. Note, for example, outer body 8 and page 19, lines 4-11.

Further, Applicants note that JP 11-191478 appears to disclose a "blowout hole" 4 which can be connected by a resistor to a ground 7. However, Applicants submit that JP 11-191478 does not provide any teaching of *an outer body* which is *made of an antistatic material* and which is *connected with a ground electrode*. In this regard, Applicants submit that the "blowout hole" 4 is not an *outer body* (note body case 1), and is not connected with a *ground electrode cooperable with the needle electrode to generate a corona discharge*. The Examiner is invited to review the English language translation of JP 11-191478 which is provided as an attachment hereto.

Accordingly, Applicants submit that JP 11-191478 does not provide any teaching which would have motivated one of ordinary skill in the art to make the modification suggested by the Examiner. Further, Applicants submit that such modification is clearly the result of impermissible hindsight reasoning based upon the disclosure of the present application, rather than the teachings of the references themselves.

Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of claims 10-12 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is improper at least for each and certainly for all of the above-noted reasons. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection, and an early indication of the allowance of these claims.

On page 3 of the Official Action, claims 15, 19 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over TAYLOR et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,975,090) in view of JP 6-154027 (Applicants note that an English language translation of JP 6-154027 is provided as an attachment hereto).

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 15, 19 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). Applicants note that claim 19 has been canceled, and that the subject matter of claim 19 has been added to independent claim 15.

Claim 15, as presently amended, includes, inter alia, “a brush head having a brush base made of an antistatic material and formed with a multiplicity of bristles, said brush base having an opening defined therein for passage of the ions from the ion generator to an outside of the hairbrush; wherein some of the bristles around the opening in the brush base are removed to provide a plain surface area where no bristle exist.”

Applicants submit that TAYLOR et al. lacks any disclosure of a *brush base made of an antistatic material*. In this regard, Applicants submit that there is particularly no disclosure of the brush base being made of antistatic material at column 10, lines 47-52 of TAYLOR et al., which portion was indicated by the Examiner.

Applicants further submit that TAYLOR et al. lacks any disclosure of *an ion passage opening in a brush base around which there is provided a plain surface area with no bristles* (as is apparently acknowledged by the Examiner in the statement of the

rejection).

Applicants note that Figure 2B of TAYLOR et al. shows a brush base having bristles 140 and openings 150. However, there is no disclosure in TAYLOR et al. of the brush base having a plain surface area with no bristles around the openings 150. In particular, as shown in Figure 2B, the bristles 140 are provided in rows which pass between the openings 150, and there is no plain surface without bristles provided around the openings. In contrast, the present application teaches providing such a plain surface without bristles around the openings in order to reduce interference with ions passing out through the blowoff port. Note, for example, plain surface area 18 shown in Figures 20-26 and 29; page 5, line 29 through page 6, line 13; page 20, lines 2-5; page 20, line 28 through page 21, line 9; and page 21, line 21 through page 22, line 20.

Further, Applicants submit that JP 6-154027 does not provide any teaching which would have motivated one of ordinary skill in the art to make the modification suggested by the Examiner. In this regard, the Examiner is invited to review the English language translation of JP 6-154027 which is provided as an attachment hereto. Further, Applicants submit that such modification is clearly the result of impermissible hindsight reasoning based upon the disclosure of the present application, rather than the teachings of the references themselves.

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Applicants also submit that dependent claim 20, which is at least patentable due to its dependency from claim 15, for the reasons noted above, recites additional features of the invention and is also separately patentable over the prior art of record.

Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of claims 15, 19 and 20 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is improper at least for each and certainly for all of the above-noted reasons. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection, and an early indication of the allowance of claims 15 and 20.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Entry and consideration of the present amendment, reconsideration of the outstanding Official Action, and allowance of the present application and all of the claims therein are respectfully requested and now believed to be appropriate.

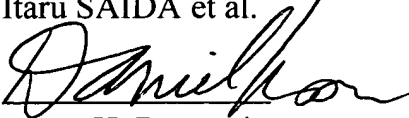
Applicants have made a sincere effort to place the present application in condition for allowance and believe that they have now done so.

Any amendments to the claims that have been made in this amendment, which do not narrow the scope of the claims, and which have not been specifically noted to overcome a rejection based upon the prior art, should be considered cosmetic in nature, and to have been made for a purpose unrelated to patentability, and no estoppel should be deemed to attach thereto.

Should there be any questions or comments, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

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Attachments: English language translations of JP 6-154027 and JP 11-191478